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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6963
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ROME
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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USAID FOR BHR/OFDA FOR B. SANFORD, M. ROGERS; BHR/FFP FOR C.W.T. HAGELMAN3, B. VOGLER; A/AID FOR R. MCCALL; DAA/AFR FOR IV. NEWTON; AFR/SA FOR N. NEWMAN, C. PALMA; AFR/SD FOR W. WHELAN; NAIROBI FOR BHR/OFDA/ARO FOR G. GOTTLIEB; STATE FOR AF/S KRAFT; GABORONE FOR RCSA, R. MORTON; GENEVA PLEASE PASS TO UNOCHA; ROME PLEASE PASS TO FODAG, PRETORIA PASS TO AG MIN RHELM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EAI EAGR

SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE'S POTENTIAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS

REF: HARARE 4085

11. SUMMARY: THIS IS A USAID/BHR ACTION REQUEST (SEE PARA 10.). DUE TO A VARIETY OF FACTORS - INCLUDING CYCLONE ELINE, THE COMMERCIAL FARM INVASIONS, THE GOVERNMENT'S 'FAST-TRACK' RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE - ZIMBABWE IS FACING POTENTIALLY SERIOUS FOOD SECURITY PROBLEMS AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS OVER THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONGER-TERM. IN RESPONSE TO THIS SITUATION, SEVERAL DONOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/CONTINGENCY PLANNING INITIATIVES ARE NOW UNDERWAY. MISSION REQUESTS BHR SHORT-TERM TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO ASSIST IT IN ENGAGING IN THESE ACTIVITIES TO BETTER ASSESS THE PROBABILITY AND EXTENT OF THE EMERGING HUMANITARIAN THREAT IN ZIMBABWE, AND ANY REQUIRED MULTI-DONOR (INCLUDING U.S.G.) RESPONSE. END SUMMARY.

12. PROBLEM STATEMENT: SEVERAL RECENT EVENTS HAVE LED TO EMERGING POTENTIALLY SERIOUS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN ZIMBABWE. THESE INCLUDE:

--THE AFTERMATH OF CYCLONE ELINE: DESPITE CONSIDERABLE RELIEF EFFORTS TO DATE, APPROXIMATELY 30,000 PEOPLE REMAIN DISPLACED WITHIN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ZIMBABWE, WHERE SOME 122,000 HECTARES OF CROPS WERE LOST OR SEVERELY AFFECTED AS A RESULT OF THE FEBRUARY FLOODS. WITH THE IMPENDING RAINY SEASON, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED TO QUOTE SETTLE UNQUOTE THESE PEOPLE, AND PROVIDE THEM WITH MINIMUM SHELTER AND INPUT PACKAGES FOR THE UPCOMING AGRICULTURAL SEASON.

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--THE IMPACT OF THE FARM INVASIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ONGOING 'FAST-TRACK' RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM: ALTHOUGH ACCURATE NUMBERS ARE DIFFICULT TO COME BY, ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL AGRICULTURAL AND PLANTATION WORKER'S UNION (GAPWUZ), SOME 5,000-10,000 FARM WORKERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISPLACED DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS OF UNREST IN THE COMMERCIAL FARMING AREAS. UNDER ONGOING GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ACQUIRE 804 FARMS, AS MANY AS 45,000 WORKERS' JOBS ARE IN IMMEDIATE JEOPARDY (PRESUMABLY INCLUDING THE 5,000-10,000 NOTED ABOVE). NOTE: THESE ESTIMATES ARE BASED ON A WEIGHTED AVERAGE OF 55 WORKERS PER FARM (BASED ON THE LOCATIONS OF THE CURRENT LIST OF FARMS DESIGNATED FOR RESETTLEMENT). THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF WORKERS PER FARM VARIES CONSIDERABLY BY AGRO-ECOLOGICAL REGION. HENCE, THESE AVERAGE ESTIMATES COULD VARY CONSIDERABLY, DEPENDING UPON THE FINAL GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE FARMS ACTUALLY RESETTLED. END NOTE. WITH AN AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE OF 5-6 PERSONS (WHICH ALSO VARIES BY REGION), THESE FIGURES TRANSLATE INTO BETWEEN 25,000-60,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED NOW, AND APPROXIMATELY 250,000-300,000 PEOPLE IN IMMEDIATE JEOPARDY.

IN ADDITION, IF STATED GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ACQUIRE AND RESETTLE 3,000+ FARMS BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR ARE REALIZED (A LOGISTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY IN OUR VIEW), THESE NUMBERS COULD SWELL SIGNIFICANTLY TO AS MANY AS 350,000 WORKERS (OR ALMOST

1 MILLION PEOPLE). ONLY AN ESTIMATED 30% OF THESE FARM WORKERS HAVE HOMES IN THE COMMUNAL LANDS. THEREFORE, WITH NO STATED PLANS FOR THEIR INCLUSION INTO THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM, THERE IS NO PLACE FOR THESE DISPLACED PEOPLE TO GO. AS A RESULT, "THEY ARE JUST WANDERING ABOUT" (GAPWUZ). AN ADDITIONAL ESTIMATED 40,000-60,000 FARM WORKERS AND CASUAL

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LABORERS ARE FACING REDUCED OR NO PAY AS A RESULT OF REDUCED WORK OPPORTUNITIES DUE TO THE DISRUPTIONS TO FARMING CAUSED BY THE OCCUPATIONS AND UNREST. IN TRADITIONALLY FOOD INSECURE AREAS, CASUAL LABOR ALLOWED THE POOR TO OBTAIN CASH INCOME THAT HELPED PROVIDE A SAFETY NET IN THESE AREAS. THIS COPING MECHANISM, TOO, HAS NOW BEEN DISRUPTED DUE TO THE CONTINUED FARM INVASIONS.

--THE PRE AND POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE: THIS CONTINUING POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS DISPLACED AN ESTIMATED 12,000 PEOPLE FROM LARGE RURAL AND PERI-URBAN AREAS. THERE ARE FEW SUPPORT STRUCTURES AVAILABLE FOR THESE PEOPLE AS WELL.

--URBAN VULNERABILITY: ONGOING GOVERNMENT RETRENCHMENTS AND INCREASED BUSINESS CLOSURES DUE TO THE CURRENT MACRO-ECONOMIC CRISIS ARE RESULTING IN RISING UN-/UNDER-EMPLOYMENT BEYOND THE ESTIMATED 50% NATIONAL AVERAGE. THIS YEAR ALONE, FOR EXAMPLE, 200,000 JOBS HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST, WITH 400,000 ADDITIONAL URBAN JOBS IN REAL JEOPARDY BY THE END THE YEAR. THIS SITUATION COULD WORSEN SIGNIFICANTLY, IF CURRENT THREATS TO EXTEND THE INVASION/OCCUPATION TACTICS TO URBAN AND PERI-

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URBAN BUSINESSES ARE PUT INTO EFFECT.

AT THE SAME TIME, PRICES FOR ALL BASIC COMMODITIES ARE CONTINUING TO ESCALATE FUELED BY THE LONGSTANDING 50+% INFLATION RATE AND HARD CURRENCY SHORTAGES. IN JULY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PRICE OF PARAFFIN (USED FOR COOKING IN MOST URBAN HOUSEHOLDS) INCREASED BY 128%, PETROL - 25%, DIESEL - 19%, COMMUTER (BUS) FARES - 25%, BREAD - 10% AND (IN AUGUST) MEAT - 25%. MOREOVER, FURTHER SIGNIFICANT PRICE INCREASES ARE EXPECTED AS THE CONTINUING FUEL PRICE INCREASES FILTER THROUGH THE SYSTEM, COMBINED WITH THE RECENT 30% CURRENCY DEVALUATION AND SIGNIFICANT PENDING WHEAT SHORTAGES (SEE BELOW). IN FACT, SOME ANALYSTS PREDICT THAT INFLATION MAY REACH AS HIGH AS 80% BY THE END OF THE YEAR. THIS SITUATION IS INCREASING THE VULNERABILITY OF THOSE WHO ARE RELIANT ON MARKETS FOR THE PURCHASE OF THEIR BASIC SUPPLIES, IN MANY CASES, BEYOND ACCEPTABLE LIMITS, AS MANY FAMILIES CUT BACK TO TWO MEALS A DAY OR LESS.

13. FOOD SECURITY: AS A RESULT OF A 'BUMPER' MAIZE HARVEST THIS PAST YEAR, WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS OF FARM WORKERS AND CYCLONE VICTIMS NOTED ABOVE (AND A FEW OTHER POOR-HARVEST AREAS), FOOD SECURITY IN RURAL AREAS IS GENERALLY GOOD FOR THIS YEAR. MAIZE PRICES IN URBAN AREAS AND AT THE ZIMBABWE

AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY EXCHANGE (ZIMACE) HAVE ACTUALLY DECREASED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. WITH AN EXPECTED SURPLUS OF SOME 600,000 MT THIS SEASON, THIS SITUATION IS NOT EXPECTED TO ALTER DRAMATICALLY ANYTIME SOON.

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14. THE SITUATION IS NOT AS GOOD, HOWEVER, FOR WHEAT. EVEN IN GOOD YEARS, ZIMBABWE IS AN IMPORTER OF HARD WHEAT FOR BLENDING WITH LOCAL PRODUCTION FOR MILLING PURPOSES AT ABOUT A 2:1/LOCAL:IMPORTED RATIO. AS A RESULT OF FOREIGN CURRENCY SHORTAGES, HOWEVER, THE COUNTRY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO IMPORT ITS ADDITIONAL WHEAT REQUIREMENTS THIS YEAR (I.E., ONLY 87,000 MT WAS IMPORTED LAST YEAR FOR A LOCAL HARVEST OF 320,000 MT). ACCORDING TO THE CEREALS PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION (CPA) OF ZIMBABWE, THIS SITUATION HAS RESULTED IN AN ESTIMATED 50,000-100,000 MT SHORTFALL FOR THIS SEASON (UNTIL THIS YEAR'S WINTER WHEAT IS HARVESTED IN OCTOBER) THROUGH THE MORE RAPID DEPLETION OF AVAILABLE LOCAL STOCKS THAN WOULD NORMALLY BE THE CASE (IF THE SUPPLEMENTARY IMPORTED WHEAT WAS AVAILABLE FOR BLENDING PURPOSES). AS A RESULT, WHEAT PRICES ARE INCREASING, WITH FORWARD BIDS FOR OCTOBER WHEAT AT ZIMACE INCREASING BY AS MUCH AS 54% (FROM MAY PRICES).

15. THESE TRENDS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, AS LATE/REDUCED PLANTINGS DUE TO WET WEATHER AND THE FARM INVASIONS (THE BULK OF THE WINTER WHEAT IN ZIMBABWE IS GROWN ON THE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE-OWNED, IRRIGATED COMMERCIAL FARMS) IS EXPECTED TO RESULT IN A 20-30% REDUCTION IN THIS SEASON'S OCTOBER HARVEST (I.E., 250,000 MT VS. AN ESTIMATED 400,000+ MT ANNUAL CONSUMPTION REQUIREMENT). WITH THE CONTINUING SEVERE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ZIMBABWE WILL BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE IMPORTS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THIS SIGNIFICANT PROJECTED WHEAT DEFICIT AS IT HAS IN RECENT YEARS. WHILE SOME OF THIS SHORTFALL CAN/WILL BE MET THROUGH SUBSTITUTION OF RELATIVELY ABUNDANT MAIZE ('MEALIE MEAL') FOR WHEAT (BREAD) BY CONSUMERS, FLOUR AND BREAD PRICES ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO ESCALATE OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

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THESE SHORTAGES/PRICE INCREASES WILL BE MOST SEVERELY FELT IN THE URBAN AREAS, WHERE CONSUMERS RELY MORE HEAVILY ON PURCHASED BREAD FOR THEIR DAILY FOOD SUPPLIES. ALTHOUGH ESTIMATES VARY, THIS SITUATION COULD BECOME CRITICAL NEAR THE END OF THIS YEAR, POSSIBLY RESULTING IN SERIOUS URBAN UNREST (SIMILAR TO THE FOOD RIOTS WHICH OCCURRED IN DECEMBER 1998). MOREOVER, OVER THE LONGER TERM, PROSPECTS ARE EVEN BLEAKER AS THE CONTINUING DISRUPTIONS AND GROWING DISLOCATIONS ON THE COMMERCIAL FARMS ARE EXPECTED TO SEVERELY IMPACT NEXT YEAR'S WHEAT HARVEST.

16. WITH THE NATIONAL POVERTY RATE ALREADY AROUND 70%, MOST ZIMBABWEANS ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO ABSORB THIS SEEMINGLY INTERMINABLE STREAM OF NEGATIVE ECONOMIC SHOCKS. AND, WITH EMPTY COFFERS AND LITTLE/NO PROSPECTS FOR ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL CREDIT, GOVERNMENT APPEARS POWERLESS TO BE ABLE TO MOUNT ANY EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO THIS INCREASINGLY DIRE HUMANITARIAN THREAT. NOTE: EVEN NOW, THE GRAIN MARKETING BOARD (GMB) - THE GOVERNMENT'S MONOPOLY GRAIN TRADING PARASTATAL - IS UNABLE TO SOURCE THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO PURCHASE LAST YEAR'S MAIZE CROP FROM FARMERS. THIS DELAY IS

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SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZING NEXT YEAR'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AS THE RAINY SEASON APPROACHES AND FARMERS HAVE NO FUNDS/CREDIT TO PURCHASE THE NECESSARY INPUTS. END NOTE.

NOTE: OVER THE LONGER TERM, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN RECENT TIMES ZIMBABWE HAS EXPERIENCED SEVERE (MAJOR, WIDESPREAD) DROUGHTS EVERY SEVERAL YEARS. WITH AT LEAST AVERAGE RAINFALL FOR THE PAST THREE SEASONS, THE CHANCES FOR ANOTHER MAJOR DROUGHT EVENT ARE INCREASING EACH YEAR. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO SUGGEST THAT A DROUGHT WILL OCCUR THIS YEAR, THE POTENTIAL HUMANITARIAN EFFECTS OF SUCH AN EVENT WOULD BE MOST SERIOUS, INDEED, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMBINED WITH THE CURRENT WIDESPREAD TURMOIL IN THE COUNTRY'S FARMING SECTOR. THE PROVERBIAL STRAW ON THE CAMEL'S BACK COMES TO MIND HERE. END NOTE.

17. MULTI-DONOR RESPONSE: IN RESPONSE TO THIS EMERGING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, SEVERAL DONORS HAVE EMBARKED ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/CONTINGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES. THE MOST PROMINENT OF THESE ACTIVITIES IS THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM'S (UNDP'S) INTER-AGENCY EFFORT AIMED AT CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE HEALTH AND NUTRITION, WATER AND SANITATION, FOOD (SECURITY) AND EDUCATION SECTORS. ONGOING SINCE JULY, A FINAL REPORT ON THIS ACTIVITY IS EXPECTED IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, AT WHICH TIME UNDP PLANS TO PRESENT THE PLAN - INCLUDING A SERIES OF AGENCY/SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROJECT PROPOSALS - TO OTHER DONORS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR SUPPORT. COMPLEMENTING THIS EFFORT, OVER THE MEDIUM-LONGER TERM, IS THE WORLD BANK'S (WB'S) PLANNED ENHANCED SOCIAL PROTECTION

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PROGRAM AIMED AT ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL SAFETY NET FOR ZIMBABWE'S INCREASINGLY DESPERATE POPULATION.

18. MISSION IS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH THIS RAPIDLY DETERIORATING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, ANY ASSISTANCE THE U.S.G. MIGHT OFFER IN ADDRESSING THIS SITUATION SHOULD BE PART OF A CONCERTED MULTI-DONOR RESPONSE. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS IN OUR BEST INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE IN AND ENSURE A USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO THE CURRENT U.N. AND WB-SPONSORED CONTINGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES.

19. IN ADDITION TO THE EMERGING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, OTHER FACTORS - HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, THE RECENT VIOLENCE, FUEL SHORTAGES AND INCREASING POLITICAL COMPETITION - ARE CREATING A POTENTIALLY COMBUSTIBLE COMBINATION. IN RESPONSE, THE U.S.G. SHOULD ENGAGE IN A PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION PLANNING EXERCISE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

10. ACTION REQUEST: BASED ON THE ABOVE, MISSION REQUESTS USAID BUREAU OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR) ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING THE SERVICES OF ONE/TWO OFFICE OF FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA) AND/OR FOOD FOR PEACE (FFP) EXPERTS TO ZIMBABWE FOR AN APPROXIMATE TWO WEEK PERIOD IN MID-SEPTEMBER TO FACILITATE OUR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INPUT INTO ONGOING IN-COUNTRY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/CONTINGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSISTANCE WOULD BE TO: 1) REVIEW THE RESULTS OF CURRENT ONGOING IN-COUNTRY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/CONTINGENCY PLANNING ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING THE RESULTS OF THE CURRENT UNDP INTER-AGENCY CONTINGENCY PLANNING PROCESS AND THE STATUS OF THE

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WB'S ENHANCED SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITY, THE ANNUAL FAMINE EARLY WARNING SERVICE (FEWS) VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT EXPECTED IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, AS WELL AS SIMILAR ON-GOING CONTINGENCY PLANNING EFFORTS BY SEVERAL LOCALLY-BASED PRIVATE VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS); 2) PROVIDE AN INDEPENDENT, REALISTIC ASSESSMENT FOR THE U.S.G. OF THE LIKELY SHORT AND LONGER-TERM HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN ZIMBABWE; 3) PROVIDE EXPERT U.S.G. INPUT INTO THE FINAL RECOMMENDED MULTI-DONOR RESPONSE TO THESE IDENTIFIED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS; AND 4) (FOLLOWING DEPARTURE FROM POST) FACILITATE THE MISSION'S CONTINUING DIALOGUE ON THIS SUBJECT WITH CONCERNED USAID/W OFFICES AND OTHER AGENCIES (E.G., U.N. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO), WFP, ETC.) FOR THE TIMELY PREPARATION AND INITIATION OF ANY AGREED UPON U.S.G. ASSISTANCE (AS PART OF A GREATER MULTI-DONOR EFFORT). MISSION WILL APPRECIATE YOUR TIMELY RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE.

MCDONALD

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